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DSU Breaks Ground for New Optics Research Building

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A new state-of-the-art Optical Science Center for Applied Research building was announced. Delaware State University and Gov. Jack Markell launched DSU?s newest construction project during a groundbreaking ceremony today for the future Optical Science Center for Applied Research (OSCAR) Building.

The four-story 70,000 square foot building will be the new home of DSU?s prolific Optics Program, which since 2006 has been the recipient of $23 million in research grants, produced the University?s to first two intellectual properties, and is currently involved with NASA in its current Mars Curiosity Rover mission.

DSU President Harry L. Williams said the future OSCAR Building is reflective of the University?s current direction in striving to become the top historically black university in the country.

?Our optics research has already distinguished itself as a stellar program, and it needs a facility that will not only adequately accommodate its current work, but also provide the infrastructure environment that will facilitate the future expansion of it,? Dr. Williams said. ?The new building will provide the state-of-the-art facility that our premier scientists need to complement the research breakthrough capabilities they possess.?

The future building was made possible initially by the support of Gov. Markell, who earmarked $10 million in the fiscal 2012 budget for the project.

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?By investing in this project, we are investing in the future of our state,? said Gov. Markell. ?Students are gaining the great potential to learn cutting edge science and technology the jobs of tomorrow. Strong universities will give us the educated workforce we need for the future, and further strengthen Delaware as an attractive place for innovative businesses.?

Gov. Jack Markell said that the new Optics Building will be an investment in the future of the state.

Gov. Markell added that the Delaware General Assembly also deserves credit for its support for the future building, as it approved the $10 million toward the project in the fiscal 2012 budget.

The Optical Science Center for Applied Research (OSCAR) Building will be located next to the Village Café on the southeast quadrant of the campus, and will highly visible to the public from DuPont Highway, which runs along the east side of the University. The building ? which will be built in three phases ? will be consistent with the University?s environmental stewardship efforts and its commitment to be a part of the Obama Administration?s Better Building initiative. Toward those goals, the OSCAR Building will be designed to be economic in its long-term energy usage through the installation of radiant cooling and heating systems.

Dr. Noureddine Melikechi, founder of the DSU Optics Program, said that science and innovation can and should work together for the benefit of all citizens, including Delawareans. He said the OSCAR Building will facilitate that.

?This building is an inspirational facility that allows world class scientists and innovators to create knowledge and technological products and train students in STEM fields that have a large impact on many aspects of life," said Dr. Melikechi, who is also the dean of the DSU College of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology, and the University?s vice president of research.

The initial 27,000 square foot first phase will house state-of-the-art advanced optical research laboratories. A suite of shared laboratories will provide advanced technology testing and instrumentation to support a myriad of research needs. The OSCAR Building will provide for the full spectrum of research needs including wet chemistry, nanochemistry, conventional and confocal microscopy, scanning electronic and atomic force microscopy, as well as a complete image analysis suite.

The full 70,000 square foot building will add the capability of expanded optical laboratories, computational laboratories, class 100/1000 clean rooms, expanded office areas and a 150-seat auditorium-style classroom. In its design to promote scholarly interaction, interdisciplinary research and innovation, the building will also include open interaction spaces, meeting rooms and offices, a multipurpose meeting space and departmental offices.

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(From l-r) Optics doctoral student Julie Sejour, Provost Alton Thompson, DSU President Harry L. Williams, DSU Board of Trustees Chairman Claibourne Smith and Dr. Noureddine Melikechi, take part in the symbolic groundbreaking for the future Optical Science Center for Applied Research (OSCAR) Building.

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